

Emergency Preparedness – What it Could Mean to You and Your Family

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There's an important question we all need to ask ourselves. In the event of an emergency are we prepared? What would happen if we couldn't leave our home for days on end? What would we do if our water supply was cut off or we lost power for an extended period of time? We all know that disasters happen, often with little or no warning. Whether we live in an area prone to earthquakes, tornados or hurricanes, we should have a plan that can be immediately executed in an emergency.

Be prepared: assemble an emergency supply kit, make emergency plans, and know the resources that are available to you in your community. If telephone lines and cell service were down, do you know where these resources are located (i.e. Red Cross). Talk with your family, if you were all at separate locations, what is your plan for coming together after an emergency has taken place?

You'll find in developing your disaster/emergency plan that websites for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Center's for Disease Control (CDC), the American Medical Association (AMH) and Homeland Security are excellent resources for determining what you need to accomplish to ensure your families preparedness.

- Put your kits together (home and automobiles):
 - Bottled water
 - Canned food (no electric can opener)
 - Candles, matches, flash lights, batteries
 - Blankets
 - Change of clothes/shoes (warm weather/cold weather)
 - Consider the needs of your pets
- Develop your plan and communicate it to your family and/or friends:
 - Where you will meet
 - How will you communicate
- Be informed
 - What resources are available:
 - Internet
 - Radio
 - Red Cross
 - News stations
 - Newspaper
- Be involved:
 - Take a First Aid Course now
 - Learn CPR now
 - Will you or your family members volunteer?
 - If so, do you know if community based units are already functioning in your community? If not, contact the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) for more information
- First Responders
 - Until help arrives you are it
 - Recognize and protect yourselves and others from potential dangers/hazards
 - Be willing and able to help in response efforts without hindering or getting in the way others

In a disaster, relief efforts being provided by FEMA, Red Cross, Salvation Army and others will be focused on meeting the immediate needs of the people: shelter, food, medical and emotional support. You and your family as members of the community will be expected to do what you can for yourselves and support the efforts of emergency response organizations in any way that you can.